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H. H. H. H.

Memorial Booklet

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE

100th Anniversary Celebrations

HONORING THE ARRIVAL OF

THE REVEREND THOMAS WOOLSEY

AND

THE REVEREND HENRY BIRD STEINHAUER

IN SEPTEMBER, 1855



HENRY B. STEINHAUER
CENTENNIAL at

Goodfish and Whitefish Lakes

July 24 and 25, 1855

THOMAS WOOLSEY
CENTENNIAL at

Mission Beach, Pigeon Lake

August 7, 1855

*Prepared under the authority of the Archives Committee,
Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, by
the Chairman, the Reverend Gerald M. Hutchinson, Telford-
ville, Alta. Proceeds from sale of booklets devoted to
Steinhauer Centennial Church and Mission Beach sites.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
<i>Rev. R. H. Steinhauser</i>	
The Rev. R. H. Steinhauser	
His Life	6
His Work	8
<i>Rev. Thos. Woolsey</i>	
The Rev. Thos. Woolsey	
His Life	14
His Work	15
The Pigeon Lake Mission	18

Introduction

The year 1935 has been notable throughout both Alberta and Saskatchewan in the proud realization of the achievements of the 50 Golden years since the formation of the provinces. Communities have thrilled to the life stories of the pioneers as in privation and unending toil in high hope they founded the farms and homes and community structures which now richly sustain the present generation.

But the settlers were not the first founders of our culture. They came to a land which had been prepared for them. They entered into a society of men which had been transformed from incessant violence, undying revenge, and merciless cruelty amongst the nomadic tribes to one prepared for peaceful production, just and equitable relationships amongst all members, and tolerance for new ways of life.

The story begins far back in 1840 when the Wesleyan Society of London, England and the Hudson's Bay Company embarked upon a co-operative venture in bringing Methodist missionaries into the vast Hudson's Bay Territory encompassing the area of the four western provinces. The Rev. James Evans, an experienced missionary amongst the Indians of Upper Canada was chosen as superintendent with three recruits from England, Messrs. Barnley, Mason and Rundle. Mr. Evans shipped his goods from Guelph to Montreal to England bound for the Hudson's Bay and travelled by canoe to meet the brigade of canoes taking the party west but missed connections so that the young Englishmen came along on their own to their respective stations. Rundle who had been appointed to Fort Edmonton, waited at Norway House until his chief arrived two months later. He had not been idle, he had the generous support of the gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company and had written a stirring chapter of church history on his first contact with the North American Indians. Amongst the many people affected by his ministry was a young Swampy half-breed, by the name of Benjamin Sinclair. According to the testimony of every surviving record, he was a man of many fine skills, of warm steadfast character who received the gospel gladly and lived in it to the end of his days.

Shortly after Evans arrived, Rundle uprooted himself and with mixed emotions embarked for Fort Edmonton arriving on October 18, 1840. The story of his energetic and devoted ministry for the next seven and a half years has been told before and deserves better acquaintance. He was the first settled missionary of any church in the entire area west of the Red River Settlement. Though he was totally unacquainted with the rigors of native life and labored under physical disabilities, he never slacked nor sought refuge. One can only marvel at the certainty of his spirit and conviction which sustained him in his isolation from other

Christian workers, unless his rather spirited and contentious relationships with the Roman priest, Thibault, who came two years later can be counted as an inspiration from a fellow Christian.

In his many wanderings amongst the various tribes of Indians he became more and more possessed of the necessity of teaching them how to raise food. For these native sons, knowing the secrets of every bird and animal, living in sole dependence upon their understanding of the natural world around them, had never learned the secret of the seed, and of growth, and of God's providence through the tilling of the soil. How he longed to tell them that Good News! He knew the Gospel and could convey it effectively to change the heart of many a stalwart brave and many noble lives productive of goodness and graciousness grew from the seed he planted by song, prayer, scripture lessons, and example. But the Good News of God's providence required a language and a skill which he did not have. He tried in 1845 to start a garden on the shore of Battle River Lake but it was a complete failure. On his frequent trips from Edmonton to Rocky Mountain House and back he passed Battle Lake and Pigeon Lake and gradually formed the plan of a settlement there on what he recognized was good soil. "What a long time since I first talked of a settlement there," he wrote in 1845.

Then, wise man, he sent for the layman who had the gifts he lacked and so records in his Journal, for 1847:

"In September Benjamin Sinclair and his wife arrived from Norway House. He had come to act as company preacher; to help in forming a settlement, and to assist me in any way.

On October 2nd, started for Battle River or Pigeon Lake with Benjamin William and Ephraim to choose a place for settlement. We had only three horses, which were used for carrying so we had to walk a distance of fifty miles.

On October 28th, left Benjamin with his wife and child to proceed with the settlement."

One unfortunate circumstance in the summer of 1847 upset Rundle's plans and most seriously affected the entire development of the Church. In July he was thrown from his horse and his left arm fractured above the wrist. The wrist was tied up six days later but the joint was improperly set and the arm crippled for life. Consequently when Benjamin arrived Mr. Rundle was seriously handicapped and on July 4, 1848 he writes, "Left Edmonton in a crude boat accompanied by an Indian and a boy." They descended the North Saskatchewan to Norway House, thence to Hudson's Bay and England for relief and he was never to return. Nor was he replaced. Benjamin Sinclair thus became the sole representative of the Protestant Church west of Norway House. The young, native layman had been appointed by Rundle who reported to London so that he had little connection with the Methodist Church of Canada though they did know of his presence. He worked alone

without sight of a missionary, withstanding the natural interpretation of the Roman Catholics that the Protestants had deserted them, holding what he could of Rundle's work and praying for the day a missionary would come.

Some time after the establishment of the Pigeon Lake settlement, Sinclair's men were massacred for they lived in a no-man's-land of constant warfare between the rival tribes. Sinclair determined to move his settlement north and east amidst the more friendly Crees and settled at Lac la Biche about 1850.

Can you imagine his excitement then after 7 years of waiting when, in 1853, he journeyed with the Hudson's Bay factor from Lac la Biche to Fort Pitt to meet the brigade bringing two missionaries newly ordained by the London, Ontario Conference of the Methodist Church—The first Home Missionaries of the Protestant Church in the west.

Think of the day—Sunday, September 9, 1853, as Benjamin ends his waiting and with pentup emotion welcomes the Rev. Thomas Woolsey and the Rev. Henry Bird Steinhauer. Mr. Woolsey is a stranger to Benjamin but he is Mr. Rundle's brother-in-law so is assured of a place in his affections. Mr. Steinhauer is an old friend and fellow-laborer from the Norway House days.

Mr. Woolsey reported that:

"Language fails to describe the joyous manner in which he received us. He said that he had done his best to preserve Rundle's Indians from going over to the Romanists as the priests had done their best to get them to apostatize. Brother Sinclair said that the Indians had been expecting a missionary for seven years, and that some of them had often times sat down and wept when they thought that they might never again hear the herald of the Cross. It is an affecting sight to see a man in tears, and especially so to find him weeping because deprived of that Gospel which so many who are at ease in Zion do not sufficiently value."

After two days rest and four days travel upstream, the brigade numbering some 17 boats with about 160 persons, reached the point of Mr. Steinhauer's point of debarkation for Lac la Biche. Arrangements had been made for horses and men to meet the party there to take him with his family and effects to their mission station where Sinclair had a house ready for them. Mr. Woolsey proceeded on to Fort Edmonton, arriving on September 20th.

Thus did the Protestant Church in Canada begin its labors for Christ and culture in Alberta 100 years ago this summer with the appointment and support of these two men, one English, the other Indian, brothers and fellow-laborers in the same holy cause. How many of the triumphs of righteousness and justice and mutual concern amongst men which made possible the formation of a province, were rooted in these two men! Who can doubt that in their obedience and devotion the God of all nations found a vehicle for the fulfilment of his purposes in this land? When we properly rejoice in the 50 years of life as a province, let us rejoice again and thank God for the worthy lives and labors of the men who stood at its beginnings.

The Rev. Henry Bird Steinhauer

HIS LIFE

DATE: _____



Figure 1

This remarkable man was born in the Indian village of Rama on the shores of Lake Couchiching, Ontario, about the year 1820. It is reported of him:

"He is a thorough Indian of the Credit Band (Ojibway), and one of the first little boys in the mission school at that place. On condition of assuming his name, Henry Steinhauer, a gentleman in the United States, had defrayed the expenses of his education for a number of years. (Mr. Steinhauer had lost his own son and was attracted to the character of a group of Indian boys on a missionary tour.)

On June 17, 1828, the Rev. William Case, a great missionary amongst the Indians of Upper Canada, presided at a service in which 132 Indians were baptized, this young lad amongst them. Under Mr. Steinhauer's assistance he was sent to Grape Island to school for 3 years where he learned the skills of farming, building, and crafts. From there he went to Cazenovia Seminary, New York, and in 1834, at the age of fourteen years, was appointed school teacher in the Credit Mission.

In 1835 he was sent on to Upper Canada College and for the next five years alternated between college and teaching at the Aldersville School.

The year 1840 marked a major change in his life work. The Wesleyan Society of London, England, had reached agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company to send a deputation of missionaries into the vast western territories. The Rev. James Evans, proven missionary amongst the Indians was chosen to head the party and he chose as a native helper the promising student and teacher, Henry Steinhauer. He was placed first at Rainy Lake but shortly after when Mr. Evans required special assistance with his translations and the perfecting of the syllabic characters, he sent for Mr. Steinhauer. When Mr. Evans left for England in 1846, Steinhauer and Mason were left in charge of Norway House, later placed in charge of Oxford House.

sole appointee of the Methodist Church except for Benjamin Sinclair who had been left behind by Bundle at Pigeon Lake.

When in 1854, the Methodist Church in Canada was ready to take charge of the Western Mission work, the Rev. John Ryerson made a tour of inspection of some of the western missions, then, taking Mr. Steinhauer with him, embarked for London. The

account of their October voyage through the Hudson's Strait threatened on all sides by gathering icebergs, makes thrilling reading. So, too, does the extended speaking tour throughout the churches of England. In December he returned to Canada, and with Mr. Woolsey was ordained at the Methodist Conference in London, Ontario. By mid-June they had begun their long journey to their new appointments at Edmonton and Lac la Biche. While Mr. Woolsey seems to have been the senior missionary in respect to the Board and the writing of reports, Mr. Steinhauer by virtue of his long experience in missions, his mastery of language and his standing as a native Indian, was in all respects the guide of the missionary expedition.

At Norway House, Mr. Steinhauer was reunited with his family and shortly after departed with his family from their homes and friends for the upper reaches of the Saskatchewan. While he had never been so far west before, the way was prepared for him by the faithful labors of Rundle and Sinclair. Sinclair had been a friend and fellow-worker from the early Norway House days. Mr. Steinhauer's wife was a niece of Mrs. Sinclair, but more than all, Sinclair had been working for the day when the missionary would come.

Steinhauer and Sinclair went first to Lac la Biche where a commodious house had been built. The site was unsatisfactory however, probably because of continuing friction with the Roman Catholic Mission also located in Lac la Biche; so by 1837 they had left their establishment in favor of a new location at Whitefish Lake which was to prove the scene of his labors for almost 30 years. The development of a productive community and a Christian society under his leadership is a lasting monument and tribute to the man, an achievement almost beyond present day believing. He brought a family of three from Norway House, two girls and a boy, Sam. Subsequent years brought the family to ten with the coming of Arthur, Sarah, Eva, Edgerton, Robert, Nancy and Augustus. He agreed to leave Whitefish for Pigeon Lake during the year 1873-4 but returned to spend the rest of his life on his chosen ground except for one trip to Ontario in 1880.

The years of unceasing labor took their toll, sickness and accident weakened him so that on December 30, 1884, though not yet 65 years of age, his life was spent. He had lived through the transition from the nomadic, warring life of the Indians to a peaceful, productive community, the first permanent settlement of Indians in the west, had seen his family grow up to take their places with two sons trained to follow him in the ministry of the Church they had all come to love and serve. In his faithfulness he had established great friendships which were to prove of utmost importance to the young nation in the troubled days of the rebellion. His name must stand high on the honor roll of Church and province through all generations.

HIS WORK

The work of Mr. Steinhauer at Whitefish Lake is unique in so many respects that it deserves special consideration and certainly further study. It was the only mission development entirely under native leadership; it was not related to the established fur-trade in any way, was rather off the beaten path so that most of the travellers missed it altogether; and it was the first permanent settlement of Indians; it demonstrates certain principles of cultural development amongst Indian peoples which may guide the future of such work. Success did not come easily though it seems now that it did come quickly. Mr. Steinhauer has given us his own account of the beginnings:

BEGINNING AT WHITEFISH LAKE

By Rev. H. B. Steinhauer (1857)

When we pitched our tent on the shore of White Fish Lake it was a day of small things. Our party small, only two wigwams; the inmates of them extent of our first congregation. Our enemies prophesied certain failure of the undertaking. What can an Indian do with Indians to make prayer men and women of them? Besides, not having the garb of a true minister or priest, the Indians will not look at him, in a year or two he will gather up his duds and go back to where he came from.

Quite different were the feelings and intentions of the despised worker. Though often weary or faint, yet he pursued the duties marked out. He felt the awfulness of his situation, for the vows of God were upon him, and he went forward trusting in the Lord Jehovah in whom is everlasting strength. Often when engaged in secular labor the want of food was felt. The larder being empty, if in summer he goes into the bush, picks a few berries for his dinner, or takes his gun and shoots a partridge or a rabbit, and the missionary goes on at the same time not neglecting to keep the old gospel musket in trim, ready for use at every opportunity. The game of this kind that could be reached was at first shy and wild, and far down in the valley and dark wilderness; but by and by groans were heard, and soba, with cries of great pain; then it was known the old musket had taken effect. As the aim was to kill now the object was to heal and make alive. If the case of the humble worker has been reached by the skill of the Great Physician, so can these dark and benighted ones. Then the "shout of a king" was in our camp. This was the first indication of the coming day upon the darkness of this people.

To begin to work the soil was the next endeavour, though anyone who, through life long has been blessed with means proper to till the ground might have smiled at our first attempt in this direction. Hoes, or anything wherewith to work the ground, we had none. It is said that an Indian is always poor, but is never out of contrivance. We went to the woods and chopped down

Blackfeet had killed a Cree, but we moved on and camped in a valley by the side of a very high hill, called the "Heart Hill." By and by the herald cried out, "The Blackfeet! The Blackfeet!" I.e. the hill was covered with men, some on foot, and some on horses looking down on us as we quietly rested in our tents. We had un-awares, come and pitched our camp too near the enemies' grounds. Many a heartfelt prayer went up to Him who hitherto had been our strong tower of defence "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we remembered the name of our God." Who again in this instance turned away and assuaged the wrath and malice of our enemies, proving that they who trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved." Thus unhurt, the next morning, we passed on our way the enemy still looking down as if ready to pounce upon us, "but the Lord suffered them not."

The Rev. Lachlan Taylor states in the report of his western visit that the Whitefish Mission was founded in 1858. Seven years later Mr. Steinhauer was able to report to the Missionary Committee

"There are 31 families, numbering 165 souls always resident here. 68 of these are members of our church besides 10 that are on trial. These are apart from great numbers that merely visit the station periodically. There are 34 children connected with our day school, and rather more belonging to the Sabbath School."

Considerable land is under culture at the Mission, besides several plots worked by the Indians. The produce has not been uniform, but 500 bushels of potatoes, 80 of barley, and a large quantity of turnips have been raised by the missionary alone. There are 11 head of cattle, and 16 horses belonging to the Mission."

By 1870 Mr. Steinhauer lists

"An average congregation of 200: church members 118, local preachers 3, Sunday scholars 85, in the day school 60 with an average attendance of 45. In addition to this village containing between 300 and 400 inhabitants, the Missionary regularly preaches at two other places 45 miles apart. Number of members in the district, 443."

A deputation composed of Chief Factor Christie, Richard Hardisty, The Rev. George McDougall and John McDougall visited Whitefish and conducted an examination of the school students with respect to reading, writing, spelling, geography, arithmetic and Bible history. They record the following judgement:

"The Indians at Whitefish Lake were in advance of all the other natives of the Saskatchewan country, which spoke well for the ability and devotion of the missionary, and so hard had he labored that chiefly with his own hands he had built a commodious parsonage, and with the assistance of the Indians was busy collecting materials for building a larger church."

In 1873, the Rev Dr Lachlan Taylor, Superintendent of Missions visited Whitefish while on a tour of inspection.

"Here we were much disappointed to find the neat Mission house locked and the missionary and his family, and the teacher and his family with the large majority of our people away hundreds of miles on the prairie hunting buffalo. The premises consist of a plain log church 30 x 20, a Mission House with five rooms and a kitchen neat and comfortable, and a stable that answers the purpose and all erected with the missionary's own hands with what help the Indians could give him, and without expense to the society." Editors note: Dr Taylor gained his information from Benjamin Sinclair who makes no mention of his own considerable assistance.)

As early as 1867 a group of Whitefish Lake Indians wrote a remarkable petition addressed to the Missionary Committee. Not only is the request of considerable importance but the language and style in which the request is expressed make this document worthy of study.

PETITION FROM THE INDIANS AT THE WHITEFISH LAKE WESLEYAN MISSION

January 8, 1867

We, the undersigned, the Indians of this Mission, deem it nothing more than our duty as Christians, to acknowledge our heartfelt thankfulness to God and to you, the good people of Canada who support our Missions in this far off land and in expressing our gratitude we at the same time supplicate further aid, and in doing so we hope to be forgiven when you become acquainted with our motive for doing so. We need not tell you that it is now some twenty six years since a Rundle visited us we were then in utter darkness as in the future and it pleased the Almighty through His instrumentality to enlighten our dark and benighted minds as to our real state by nature. Many were by him brought to Christ, and have already gone to their happy homes and many still live who pray and bless God for him. After remaining seven years among us we were sorry to see him leave and go home to his country the privations and exposure to the severity of the climate being too much for his bodily strength. But though he had gone God did not altogether leave us alone, his Spirit was still among us and the spark which had been kindled continued amidst the invasion of papery until it was almost extinguished, when after a lapse of seven more years God remembered us and sent us a Woolsey and a Stenhaus. You may well guess what our feelings were when we saw the true ambassadors of Christ among us once more. The former took for his sphere of labour the Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House Mission and the latter this place. He still thanks God that he is spared to remain among us. Since then God, in a special manner, has designed to prosper and approve the humble efforts of your Missionary at this place. He

takes a deep interest in our welfare both of a spiritual and a temporal character. It is needless to say that we highly esteem and appreciate the excellence of such a man among us. We have the Scriptures read and expounded to us in our own native tongue, and all the ceremonies and statutes of the Church as well. We trust and pray that he may long be spared to us. We, the present generation, have everything to be thankful for: a good Church, a Minister who with untiring zeal, amidst many secular duties which a Missionary cannot well avoid in this country, holds forth the blessed promises of a Divine Being. We often pity him, and wonder why no one in the shape of a school teacher has been allowed to assist him. Our children are now growing up, and no school master to teach them. We hear that in the Christian countries there are schools as well as churches, and school teachers as well as Ministers. Our Minister in 1861 wrote to the present Chairman about a school, and his reply was "You might have one." We then the ensuing year got one for a short time. Since then several appeals have been made for a supply in that lack of service, nothing favorable as yet has resulted from these appeals. Are our children to grow up like the unsought heathen around us? Will you not undertake for us? Having been already benefited in a spiritual and temporal point of view by the generosity of the Society in sending us a Missionary, we humbly hope you will not consider it a presumption on our part in asking a further help which will be a lasting benefit to our children when we, the present generation, are silent in the tomb.

We humbly hope that you and the Board will favorably consider this as coming from the poor people of White Fish Lake, Western Missouri, which they most respectfully present to you and the Board, as their humble petition for a school teacher. In the event of their granting our humble petition, either by sending a person who may be in the capacity of a teacher, or by allowing means for the support of one, we assure you and the Board we will endeavor with our poverty to help such a desirable object. This is all we have to say, trusting you will still think of us for good, and a share in your prayers. Now we send you our Christian greetings, we shake hands with you all with the long arm of our hearts.

Signed on behalf and by order of the White Fish Lake Indians,

Benjamin Sinclair,
Jacob Stanley,
John Long,
Frederick Hawk,
Samuel Jackson,
Peter Erasmus.

From this statement it will be apparent that Mr. Steinhauer was not lacking in local native leadership. He felt that the success of work amongst native peoples depended to a large extent upon this principle—as witness his report to the Missionary Committee:

"A foreigner, either as a missionary or otherwise, will never take so well with the natives of this country, let him be ever so good and kind to them, there is always a distrust on the part of the native to the foreigner, from the fact that the native has been so long down-trodden by the white man.

You will ask me, where can such good men and true be found, that will rise up and stand for their race, and for their religious and temporal elevation?"

Of course such men must be truly converted to God, and feel the constraining power of the love of Christ, in order to their undertaking this work of faith and labor of love. Some such may be found among the missions on the Saskatchewan, who I think are on a fair way of entering the work who would require better educational training than can be found in this country. There are three local preachers and two class leaders raised from amongst the members of the society at Whitefish Lake."

Despite the many demands made upon his time and energy, Mr. Steinhauer did not neglect study and scholarship. Though he had lived his early years an illiterate pagan, he achieved great stature as a Christian scholar, having translated the Old Testament from Job to Malachi, and the New Testament from Acts to Revelation.

It is not surprising to learn that the strength of such teaching and example is still producing results unto the third and fourth generations of children giving leadership amongst their people and elsewhere in nursing, teaching, farming and the trades.

The first Indian history of the Whitefish Lake reserve has been written by Mr. Sam Bull, a fine contribution to our understanding of the work that has been done. He expresses the continuing influence of the Mission in the following terms:

The Rev. H. B. Steinhauer, an ordained preacher and formerly an Ojibway Indian, and Ben Sinclair, a local preacher of the Swamps Cree tribe were the first missionaries of this settlement. It is impossible to try to put into words the wonderful work these two men did for the welfare of their people, both materially and spiritually. We owe them a heartfelt degree of thanks which it would be impossible to try to repay. The benefits are derived from their doctrine. They treated their people as a father would treat his children. Much credit also goes to our late chief Pagan (James Secum), a very forceful and highly respected figure amongst his band. He co-operated very fully with the missionaries in their work. His advice was carried out to a point without an argument which satisfied matters for the ministers.

In legal affairs Rev Steinhauer acted as an advisor to the said chief and his suggestions were carried out accordingly. They well knew there was to be a treaty. The matter was given considerable thought which enabled the Chief to transact his business in a very far-sighted manner.

It was only four months after the deaths of these old gentlemen (Steinhauer and Sinclair) that a report came in that there was an uprising of the natives at Duck Lake. On hearing this Chief Pakan gave notice for an assembly among his people advising them not to have any part in the oncoming trouble and not to participate in the rebellion no matter what happened. He tried to live up to the advice of his missionaries not to have any trouble with his fellow-men. Thus he handed down to his Band both by example and by precept."

Small wonder then that the centennial celebration of Henry Bird Steinhauer's arrival awakens a response of gratitude and wonder amongst Indians and white neighbors alike.

Rev. Thomas Woolsey

HIS LIFE

REV. THOMAS WOOLSEY



Thomas Woolsey was born in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, in 1818, a nephew of the Rev William Woolsey. He early moved to London, however, where he was for ten years a member in the far-famed City Road Circuit. He had exercised his gifts as a local preacher no less than fifteen years on his coming to Canada in 1852. At thirty four years of age he was a matured and experienced man, strong and enduring but very active. (See *Case and His Contemporaries*, vol. V, page 127.)

After serving on the Simcoe Circuit he was ordained at the London, Ont. conference in 1855 along with Henry B. Steinhauer and appointed to Fort Edmonton of the Saskatchewan District to fill the post vacated seven years earlier by his brother-in-law, the Rev R. T. Rundle.

In 1856 he complied with the request of the Indians of the Pigeon Lake District and re-occupied the mission premises erected by Benjamin Sinclair in 1847. From this station he travelled constantly throughout the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan and among the foothills of the Rockies.

About 1860 he decided to move to a more settled location to the north and east choosing a site on Smoking Lake.

In 1862 the Rev Geo. McDougall, newly-appointed Superintendent of the Saskatchewan District made his first visit to the western missions and persuaded Mr Woolsey to move to a site on the north bank of the Saskatchewan about 30 miles south of Smoking Lake. Accordingly with the assistance of John McDougall and Mr Stenhauer the new mission was established by the spring of 1863 and named Victoria.

During the summer of 1864 Mr Woolsey departed for Canada after almost 9 years continuous labor. He visited England for one year then returned to serve at Farnham, Que., New Credit, Bruce Mines, Rama and Hiawatha.

In 1885 he was superannuated and moved to Toronto, where he died May 2, 1894, at the age of 76. His life had been a blessing to many through his long and varied ministry. His name is kept alive in honor and with gratitude.

HIS WORK

On May 23, 1856 Woolsey left for his first visit amongst the Indian camps. "The dwellers in tents gave me a most hearty welcome at once fixing my abode in one of their best conical dwellings, a buffalo robe, two blankets, and a pillow constituting a couch by day and a bed by night.

June 1, Sabbath Many weep whilst worshipping the God Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The people are evidently under a gracious influence.

June 3 In consequence of a scarcity of provisions we proceed to the plains.

June 5 We are subsisting principally upon wild plants and the inner bark of trees. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

June 6 Three fine moose were killed this morning.

Upon his return to Edmonton the Indians from Pigeon Lake waited upon Mr Woolsey and learned to their delight that he intended settling down amongst them at Pigeon Lake. With his faithful interpreter and helper Peter Erasmus, he restored some of the buildings, began cultivation again, attracted a settlement around him. By May of 1857 he is able to report

"Several families arrived. Wheat, barley and oats have been sown as also the following seeds—turnips, beets, cabbages, lettuce, onions, celery. About two pounds of potatoes have been cast into the earth."

One entry of November, 1856 strikes a realistic note, a hope entertained by many a missionary,

"The chief's eldest son is desirous that I would take his

only surviving child a boy about 5 years old and train him in European habits. If the means of clothing and educating a number of children were placed in my hands I doubt not but we should have some in far brought under religious training as to ultimately proclaim salvation to the generation following."

The answering of that man's request might have given us another Steinbauer!

Mr. Woodier's efforts at Pigeon Lake were not entirely successful however. There was still considerable hostility amongst the different tribes and the mission was in the narrow land. Consequently about 1850 he moved to a new location at Needing Lake though throughout his entire stay he travelled widely amongst the encampments and fair posts. When the Rev. George McDougall visited the western missions in 1862 he also visited opening a new location on the north bank of the Saskatchewan River which he came Woodier's home until his return to Canada in the summer of 1864. In many ways he was quite unliked for work in the west. He could handle neither dogs nor horses, never learned the language though he could communicate through the syllabic symbols. Yet he worked without ceasing for 8 years leaving a great heritage of affection and respect.

While Mr. Woodier labored under limitations of language and physique his devoted spirit, gentle personality and relentless will enabled him to make a deep and lasting impression upon both Indians and whites. He had no great success in establishing mission sites and left no tangible monuments except such as can be found in the tributes of those who knew him.

Dr. John MacLennan in *Vanguards of Canada* page 97 states that Woodier taught Maskapipeton, the noted chieftain of the Cree, to read the Syllabic and presented him with a copy of the New Testament which he prized so highly that he read two chapters every day. When George McDougall visited the camp of which he was head chief he found him in his lodge reading the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. This old warrior was famed for his courage and wisdom and dreaded by enemies while he lived as a pagan, but by the grace of God he became an earnest Christian man always working in the interests of peace among the tribes while furnishing an example of heroism combined with gentleness which was a new type of character among the natives.

John McDougall served as assistant to Mr. Woodier for almost two years and while the young man active and experienced as a native in western ways was often impatient with Mr. Woodier's disabilities he never failed to appreciate his earnestness and humor. John, too, was strongly influenced by him as witness the following account found in *Saddle, Sled and Sackcloth*.

Mr W. was not a good dog driver. He could not run or even walk at any quick pace so he had to sit wedged into his caride from start to finish between camps while I kept his team on the road ahead of him. For if he upset, which he often did, he could not right himself and I had to run ahead and fix him up. (P 41)

Mr W. was kept busy holding meetings, attending councils, visiting the sick, acting as doctor and surgeon, magistrate and judge for whom else had these people to come to but the missionary? (P 51)

This was now his 9th winter in the west and still his organ of locality was so defective that he would lose himself in a ten acre field. Kind, noble, good man that he was yet it was impossible for him to adapt himself to a new country. He would always be dependent upon others. P 114-5

I missed the genuine kindly presence of my old friend Mr Wooten. He had returned to Ontario following the routes down the river in one of the Hudson's Bay Co's boats and thus I had failed to meet him. Nine years on the Saskatchewan from 1855 to 1864 in H. B. fort in Indian lodge beside many a camp fire, he had preached the living gospel of a loving Saviour. In doing this work he had undergone untold hardships, always and ever where handicapped by physical infirmities. Transplanted from the city of London England into the wilderness and wilderness of the far west having had no experience or knowledge of the conditions of frontier life in a new country with no knowledge of the language of the Indians, indeed I went so far as to say he had seldom seen an Indian in the presence of physical infirmities which were as legions everywhere around him in his new field, he was altogether dependent on those around him.

For nearly a decade this devoted servant of God had journeyed incessantly up and down through the length and breadth of the Upper Saskatchewan and among the foothills of the Rockies. He had alternately shivered and sweated, starved and feasted. When freezing he was given a camp fire in the frozen snow and robes to huddle him. When walking in the burning heat of a long hot summer day on the treeless plains he had to refresh him a cup of tepid swamp water in which an ordinary sight might behold extraordinary life. When starving, even he notwithstanding his strong Sabbatharianism was forced to travel on an quest of food.

He mastered the Syllabic system so that he could read and write in it and also teach to others the use of this wonderful invention which God gave to James Evans. It was curious to listen to him reading a chapter in the Cree

Testament to a group of Indians, himself not understanding ten words in the chapter, while his hearers were intelligently grasping every word.

He was considered a medicine man too, and many a poor Indian was relieved and aided by his hearty help in this way. Among the Hudson's Bay Company's employees he had quite a name as a kind physician. (P. 183)

THE PIGEON LAKE MISSION

This site has a unique story not because it is associated by the name of some great man but because it has been served by all of the early Methodist heroes of the faith, and because it is the earliest of all Protestant missions west of Norway House, the only site developed by Mr. Rundle.

The beginning of the story is told in the introduction as Mr. Rundle introduced Benjamin Sinclair to his new work and then was forced to leave. The site was abandoned by Sinclair following the massacre of his men and not visited again until Mr. Woolsey and Mr. Steinbauer made the trip in May, 1858. Mr. Woolsey gives us the only record we have of the substantial work accomplished there.

"Clearing of land once fenced in, gave an indication of an approach to civilization in times past though now somewhat resembling their primeval state. Two of the four log buildings may be ultimately restored. A quantity of timber originally designed for a church is much decayed. This may be regarded as a deserted village. Solitude reigns around."

But the people had not forgotten. When one of their party went ahead to herald their arrival, he soon returned with several Christian Indians.

"An affecting recognition took place, religious duties received so hearty a welcome from those who had in effect long prayed 'O thou great spirit send us a missionary.' The Chief said that he had frequently concluded that the Master of Life had given them up because of their unfaithfulness, but seeing the missionaries had filled him with joy unspeakable."

By September the Indians from Pigeon Lake sent a deputation to wait upon Mr. Woolsey and to urge him to settle amongst them once more which he determined to do. The region was still the scene of constant warfare amongst the contending tribes however so Mr. Woolsey determined to follow Mr. Sinclair's example and moved north and east to Smoking Lake.

In 1862 the Rev. George McDougall and son John made their first visit to the western stations and determined to move out at once. John remained for the winter while Mr. George McDougall

turned to Norway House to move his family west in 1863, establishing the new site on the banks of the Saskatchewan named Victoria the present day Paken. John relates that on their first visit to the Minchance family then settled at Whitefish Lake he determined to seek the hand of Abigail Minchance. They were married in the spring of 1865 and went almost at once to re-open the Pigeon Lake mission. Some of the old buildings remained so that while the site was already almost 25 years old he had to begin again. John states that the wheels of his cart on their homeward journey in April of 1865 were the first wheels to roll west of Edmonton.

While John continued to move over wide areas of the province his ministry at Pigeon Lake was marked with success from the beginning. Christian instruction and agriculture went hand in hand as he saw a new culture taking shape before his eyes.

In 1869 added strength was brought to the west including teachers for the mission schools and the Rev. Peter Campbell, who with his family was appointed to Pigeon Lake allowing John to take a broader commission amongst the scattered Indian encampments. Mr. Campbell gives some unforgettable pictures of the society in which they labored.

In a letter dated April 13 1870 he reports:

"Now there is no safety for the traveller and he who journeys alone runs a great risk of losing his scalp. Of late we have become painfully familiar with deeds of cold blooded butchery and ungeting revenge. In January two Cree were treacherously murdered and scalped at Edmonton by a half breed and a Stoney. On the 4th inst. two men three women and one child belonging to the Blackfoot tribe were also killed at Edmonton by the Cree and Stonies. One of the men killed was a Chief and after smashing out his brains and almost literally cutting him in pieces they danced the horrid scalp dance stimulating each other to further deeds of bloodshed and cruelty. The triumph of the Cree is great. They now possess the savage satisfaction of killing a Chief of the tribe who struck down their beloved Chief. Maskee pe-tum-mah one year ago. Such is savage war fare merciless cruelty deathless hate."

His account is continued in a letter dated May 19 1870.

"To grapple with deep seated and long cherished principles that stand in direct opposition to the spirit of Jesus may be exhilarating to the Christian's faith and hope but to live in constant dread of a raid from the murderous Blackfoot may not be so conducive to the increase of one's faith. It is not comfortable to retire at night with the fear that during its silent hours the horrid war whoop of these northern Ishmaelites may wake you to deadly strife. If such should occur in the day it would not be so awful but to

have night made hideous with their demon-like yells and work of death is sufficient even in thought to perplex the mind

In my last letter I stated the nature of my appointments, Woodville (Pigeon Lake) and Edmonton the former is my place of residence and the latter I try to supply regularly every three weeks—twice failed to keep the appointments on account of deep snow and fearful drifts I go to Edmonton tomorrow to fill my usual appointment, but I do not feel justified to leave my family in this isolated place over 80 miles from the nearest place of refuge be the emergency ever so great not knowing but upon my return I shall find mangled corpses instead of sunny smiles and words of welcome.

I am thankful to God to be able to say that the Lord is manifesting His power to save these poor children of the forest and plains. Of late the tidings have spread to the Stoney's far off in the mountains that sinners are being saved at this mission. Word came to us only a few days ago that the Stoney Chief Bears Paw and his band are coming to the Mission in the month of August. This Chief and his band have never visited this mission yet. Should they honor us with a visit we will have meetings almost continuously.

In conclusion, allow me to say that I do what I can to persuade the natives to build houses and cultivate the soil, believing that it is the only way to do these people permanent good. Many have expressed a strong desire to build houses and settle here.

A few years later the Superintendent George McDougall decided to send John McDougall back to Pigeon Lake while Mr Campbell was stationed at Victoria. In 1872, however, the long awaited opportunity to open a mission amongst the Stoney's to the south presented itself and John was chosen for the most difficult task. The Rev. H. B. Steinhauer reluctantly left his flourishing mission at Whitefish to serve at Pigeon Lake for the year 1873-4, then returned to Whitefish.

Thus it came about that Pigeon Lake was the one location served in turn by every one of the early Methodist missionaries. What an honor roll! Rundle, Simclair, Wonders, McDougall, Campbell, Steinhauer! And what victory they achieved in the name of Christ as His graciousness was shared by missionary and native.

While the great threats of violence were met in the earlier days, the work of the mission continued through many years, building upon the faithfulness and labor of the first missionaries and builders of civilization. Mr Steinhauer was succeeded by a native assistant, then by Mr Henry Manning in 1878, William Richardson in 1881, H. S. Jenkinson in 1882, John Nelson in 1883,

R. J. McGhee in 1893, R. T. Harden in 1905 until 1906, by which time the district was being peacefully settled by the white pioneers and the work of the Indian mission was accomplished.

PEELON LAKE MISSION



PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA

Today the old mission site is a beautiful, peaceful picnic spot commanding a great view of lake and country. Mr Hobart Dowler, master craftsman in log and stone, and his genial wife, who now make their home beside the spring around which the mission was built, welcome the increasing numbers of interested folk who visit there. Only when one visits the many Indian graves and recalls the earlier records of violence and strife finally transformed by the power of love, can one understand how the province came to be formed, and at what price.

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Chronological Outline of the Beginnings of Church Work in the Territory Now Known as Alberta, Canada

- 1838 (RC) Rev Francis Blanchet and Rev Modeste Demers made a trip through area stopping in Ft Edmonton for a time
- 1840 (M) Robert Terrill Rundle appointed to Edmonton by Wesleyan Society of London, England, with support of the Hudson's Bay Company—the first settled missionary of any church.
- 1843 (RC) Rev Jeanne Baptiste Thibault sent out by Bishop Provencher, returned to St. Boniface, back to Edmonton in 1844, settled at Devil's Lake, re-named Lac Ste. Anne
- 1844 (RC) First Mission established at Lac Ste. Anne, Thibault joined by Rev Joseph Bourassa.
- 1847 (M) First Protestant Mission established at Pigeon Lake by Benjamin Sinclair under direction of Rundle. Sinclair a native lay preacher, teacher, farmer from Norway House
- 1848 (M) Rundle returns to England leaving Sinclair as sole representative of the Protestant Church west of the Red River Settlement
- 1852 (RC) Rev Albert Lacombe replaces Thibault at Lac Ste Anne.
- 1855 (M) Thomas Woolsey appointed to Edmonton, Henry Bird Steinhauer to Lac la Biche, first home missionaries for the Canadian Protestant church.
Sinclair had ground prepared at Lac la Biche, house built
- 1856 (M) Woolsey re-opens the Pigeon Lake Mission
- 1857 (M) Steinhauer opens new site at Whitefish Lake, first permanent settlement of Indians
- 1857 (M) Woolsey visits Rocky Mountain House, first Protestant worship for at least ten years.
(RC) Chapel built within enclosure of Ft. Edmonton, beginning of permanent Mission.
- 1859 (M) Woolsey abandons Pigeon Lake for site on Smoking Lake, north of contending tribes.
- 1860 (M) Rev George McDougall appointed Superintendent of Saskatchewan District, stationed at Norway House
- 1862 (M) George and John McDougall make first visit to west, advise move from Smoking Lake to north bank of Saskatchewan River, named Victoria (now Pkan)
(RC) Bishop Tache and Father Lacombe choose site named St. Albert.
- 1863 (M) George McDougall moves family to new Mission at Victoria.

- 1864 (M) Woolsey returns to Canada after more than eight years' service without relief. A great man.
- 1865 (RC) First school established within enclosure of Fort Edmonton.
(M) John McDougall married to Abbigail Steinhauer, appointed to re-open the Pigeon Lake Mission.
- 1868 (M) George McDougall returns from east with first contingent of helpers, including Rev. Peter Campbell and family, two Snider brothers (teachers), John Chantler and Enoch Skinner.
- 1869 Smallpox epidemic resulting in death of George Mc-
-70 Dougall's daughters and one adopted daughter, and in decimation of Indians. First rebellion. Change of government from Hudson's Bay Company to Dominion Government.
- 1871 Death of Mrs. John McDougall at Victoria.
George McDougall moves to Edmonton for permanent Mission.
- 1872 First western Missions Conference in Winnipeg. Decision to open Mission amongst Stoney Indians on the Bow River. John McDougall appointed to task, ordained; visited Ontario, married to Eliza Boyd; drove by buckboard from Winnipeg to Victoria from mid-October to December 25th.
- 1873 Morleyville Mission commenced. First beef cattle driven into Southern Alberta by John McDougall. Beginning and centre for many things in Calgary and south. Dominion Parliament passed Act for purpose of establishing the Royal North-West Mounted Police.
- 1874 First contingent of R.N.W.M.P. arrived bringing new traditions of law and government.
- 1875 Rev. William Newton arrived in Edmonton, the first missionary of the Church of England in Alberta territory.
- 1876 Construction of telegraph line; geological survey parties; signing of Treaty No. 6 with Indians—signify changing times. Missionaries act as interpreters of word and deed and spirit. Rev. George McDougall died in blizzard on the prairie about forty miles east of Morley.
A new site at Fincher Creek had been selected by George McDougall with work to commence in the spring.
- 1881 Rev. A. B. Baird arrives in Edmonton, first Presbyterian missionary.

And thus was the Church properly launched under the several denominations, amongst Indians, Metis and white settlers. From 1840 until this day, lives of devotion and service have been given gladly in the cause of Jesus Christ, for which we, the heirs and fellow-labourers, must be profoundly grateful.

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